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Extraordinary Number of Photographs Acquired in Honor of Anniversary at National Gallery of Art, Washington; Many on View in Large Exhibition of Highlights, November 1, 2015-March 13, 2016



Deborah Luster, *Eddie M. 'Fat' CoCo, Transylvania, Louisiana, March 8, 2002*
gelatin silver print on aluminum

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Julia J. Norrell, in Honor of Claude Simard and the 25th Anniversary of Photography at the National Gallery of Art
© Deborah Luster, Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Washington, DC—Marking the culmination of a year-long celebration and a three-year initiative for photography at the National Gallery of Art, a major exhibition will unveil a selection of some 200 works acquired in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Gallery's photography program. ***Celebrating Photography at the National Gallery of Art: Recent Gifts***, on view from November 1, 2015, through March 13, 2016, will present pictures made from the dawn of photography in the 1840s to work by contemporary photographers. Two exhibitions mounted earlier in 2015 inaugurated the celebration.

All of the photographs on view were given or promised in honor of the 25th anniversary of photography at the National Gallery of Art and are part of a major initiative launched in 2012 to broaden and enrich the Gallery's collection and program for photography. Some 1,330 photographs were acquired through gifts or pledges as part of this undertaking including major donations of work by photographers whose art is held in depth by the Gallery—such as 172 photographs by Robert Adams, 99 by Robert Frank, 39 by Walker Evans, and 13 by Harry Callahan. Important pieces by photographers whose work was previously under-represented—such as 12 photographs by Diane Arbus, 6 by Thomas Struth, and 10 by Edward Weston—as well as artists who were not previously included in the museum's holdings—such as Joseph Vigièr, Duchenne de Boulogne, Adam Fuss, Sally Mann, Cindy Sherman, and Henry Wessel—were also acquired through gifts and pledges.

Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad, Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker, and the Stephen G. Stein Employee Benefit Trust, as well as numerous individuals and foundations from across the country have made these acquisitions possible.

To celebrate this accomplishment, the Gallery has published ***The Altering Eye: Photography at the National Gallery of Art***, a landmark volume on the permanent collection of photographs timed to coincide with the final commemorative exhibition. With general essays as well as more focused studies on individual photographers whose work the Gallery holds in depth, this publication includes over 325 reproductions and shows how the museum can now tell the history of photography from 1839 to the present day through its own collection.

"We are deeply grateful for the recent gifts of photographs to celebrate this important anniversary of the Gallery's photography program," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We wish to thank the generosity of our donors, in particular, Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad, Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker, and the Stephen G. Stein Employee Benefit Trust. Their gifts, along with the long-standing support of Betsy Karel and the Trellis Fund for our photography exhibitions and many other donors who contributed to our 25th Anniversary Photography Initiative, have substantially enhanced the depth and breadth of the Gallery's collection and program for photography."

Recent Gifts Exhibition Highlights

Organized thematically, **Recent Gifts** brings together an exquisite group of photographs, ranging from innovative examples made in the earliest years of the medium's history to key works by important post-war and contemporary artists that examine the ways in which photography continues to shape our experience of the modern world.

The exhibition celebrates the first acquisitions by the Gallery of work by the 19th-century photographers Joseph Vígier, 20th-century artists Lola Álvarez Bravo, Richard Avedon, Joe Deal, and Albert Renger-Patzsch, and contemporary photographers Paul Graham, Matthew Jensen, Simon Norfolk, and Leo Rubinfien, among others.

The exhibition begins with works that affirm the vitality and flexibility of the medium from William Henry Fox Talbot's pioneering study of architecture—*An Ancient Door, Magdalen College, Oxford* (1843), the earliest photograph in the exhibition—to Adam Fuss's elegiac *Untitled, from the series "My Ghost"* (1999), which explores the themes of mourning, loss, and the brevity of life. Other influential photographs in the history of the medium are also on view, such as László Moholy-Nagy's *Untitled (Decorating Work, Switzerland)* (1925), Edward Weston's *Nautilus Shell (Cross-section)* (1927), and Henri Cartier-Bresson's, *Alicante, Spain* (1933).

Several landmark works by Robert Frank and Richard Avedon, who revolutionized postwar photography, are on view. Vintage prints from Frank's seminal photobook *The Americans*, including *Parade—Hoboken, New Jersey* (1955), hang alongside Avedon photographs, including his famous *The Family* series, a suite of 69 portraits of the political, media, and corporate elite, commissioned in 1976 by *Rolling Stone*.

The third room of the exhibition explores photography's multifaceted relationship to the representation of the human body, showing pseudo-scientific experiments documented by the 19th-century French doctor Duchenne de Boulogne; provocative studies by Diane Arbus, including *Patriotic young man with a flag, N.Y.C. 1967* (1967); and Deborah Luster's *One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana* (1998–2002), which humanizes those on the margins of society.

New approaches to landscape in postwar photography are revealed in the fourth room in Lewis Baltz's renowned *San Quentin Point* (1982–1983) series, Henry Wessel's depictions of Southern California suburbia in *Real Estate*, and Emmet Gowin's aerial photographs of landscapes transformed by human intervention.

The final section of the show explores new approaches to the representation of time in two series by Paul Graham titled *Pittsburgh* (2004) from his award-winning publication, *A Shimmer of Possibility*, as well as Simon Norfolk's series *Stratographs* (2014) and John Divola's photographs of an abandoned house on Zuma Beach in California (1977–1978).

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the Trellis Fund. It is also made possible by the Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation. Additional funding is kindly provided by Kate and Wes Mitchell. The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation also provided support.

Celebrating Leadership Gifts to the Photography Collection and Exhibitions Program

The Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

In 2007, Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad generously established the first endowed acquisition fund for photography at the National Gallery of Art. Starting in 2012, funds from this endowment were used to acquire thought-provoking contemporary works, which were showcased earlier in 2015 in ***The Memory of Time: Contemporary Photographs at the National Gallery of Art, Acquired with the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund*** and its accompanying catalog. Including photographs by Uta Barth, Chuck Close, Vera Lutter, and Christian Marclay, among others, ***The Memory of Time*** presented work by contemporary artists who investigate the richness and complexity of photography's relationship to time, memory, and history.

The Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker Collection

In 2013, leading art collectors Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker pledged a gift from their collection that will substantially enrich the Gallery's holdings of contemporary photographs. Their promised gift features 30 large-scale, iconic photographs by Thomas Demand, Cindy Sherman, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Jeff Wall, among others. The collection, which brings together works of critically important artists who have changed the course of contemporary photography through their experimentation and conceptual scope, is especially rich in holdings of work by photographers of the famed Düsseldorf School: Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, Thomas Struth, and Thomas Ruff. It also includes significant works by other important contemporary photographers and artists working in a variety of media, such as John Baldessari and Anselm Kiefer. The Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker Collection will be one of three special exhibitions on view with the reopening of the East Building in fall 2016.

The Stephen G. Stein Employee Benefit Trust

The Stephen G. Stein Employee Benefit Trust has promised a major gift of 83 exceptional photographs in honor of the 25th anniversary. Distinguished by its large holdings of iconic works by major 20th-century photographers such as Edward Weston, Robert Frank, and Diane Arbus, the promised gift also includes seminal pictures by various artists who were active between 1857 and 2005. Highlights include Henri Cartier-Bresson's *Alicante, Spain*

(1933); Robert Frank's *Bar–Gallup, New Mexico* (1955), *Indianapolis* (1956), and *Parade–Hoboken, New Jersey* (1955); André Kertész's *Shadows of the Eiffel Tower* (before May 1929); William Eggleston's *Outskirts of Morton, Mississippi*, *Halloween* (1971) and *Tallahatchie County, Mississippi* (c. 1972); and Edward Weston's *Nautilus Shell (Cross-section)* (1927) and *Dunes at Oceano* (1936). The promised gift comprises critical works by some of the most important artists working in the medium. Several of these photographs are on view in ***Celebrating Photography at the National Gallery of Art: Recent Gifts***, including Brassai's *Streetwalker near the Place d'Italie, Paris* (c. 1932) and Diane Arbus's *Patriotic young man with a flag, N.Y.C. 1967* (1967). Additionally, to commemorate the anniversary, Stephen G. Stein has donated 25 photographs from Lewis Baltz's important portfolio *San Quentin Point: Selections* (1982–1983).

Trellis Fund and Betsy Karel

The Gallery is indebted to the Trellis Fund and its chair, Betsy Karel, for their longtime commitment to the department of photographs. For more than two decades, Ms. Karel, a member of the Gallery's Trustees' Council, and the Trellis Fund have generously supported major photography exhibitions and acquisitions by artists such as Lee Friedlander, Robert Frank, and others. The Gallery is deeply grateful to Ms. Karel and the Trellis Fund for their support of the department of photographs' 25th anniversary celebration and for her generosity in promising works from her collection in honor of the anniversary.

The 25th Anniversary Photography Initiative

The National Gallery of Art began actively acquiring photographs in 1990, and its collection of nearly 15,000 photographs by more than 600 makers encompasses the history of the medium, from its beginnings in 1839 to the present. It is distinguished by its large holdings of works by many of the medium's most celebrated masters including Eadweard Muybridge, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, Walker Evans, André Kertész, Ilse Bing, Robert Frank, Harry Callahan, Lee Friedlander, Gordon Parks, Irving Penn, and Robert Adams, among others.

In anticipation of the 25th anniversary of the Gallery's program for photography in 2015, the museum launched the 25th Anniversary Photography Initiative in 2012 to broaden and deepen the collection of photographs and secure support for its photography exhibitions, publications, and education programs. In the past three years, the Gallery has received through gifts and pledges some 1,330 photographs by some 199 artists (of whom approximately 95 were not previously represented in the collection). Foremost among these is a superb collection of 172 photographs by Robert Adams from the late 1960s through the early 2000s, carefully selected by the photographer himself to complement works already in the collection, as well as 99 exceptional donations to the museum's already stellar Robert Frank Collection. Including rare vintage prints by Frank from the early 1950s to 2000, these gifts and pledges were donated by an anonymous donor; Betsy Karel; Dr. J. Patrick and Patricia A. Kennedy; the Stephen G. Stein Employee Benefit Trust; and Jane P. Watkins. Major donations of 19th-century works include 19 Henry Peter Bosse cyanotypes, a gift of Betsy S. Aubrey and E. Steve Lichtenberg, MD and 15 photographs by Duchenne de Boulogne, a gift of W. Bruce and Delaney H. Lundberg. Major 20th-century additions include 12 photographs by Diane Arbus, such as *Retired man and his wife at home in a nudist camp one morning, N.J. 1963* (1963), a pledge from Randi and Bob Fisher, and four by Richard Avedon, including his 1976 portfolio *The Family*, a pledge from Lisa and John Pritzker.

The 25th Anniversary Photography Initiative at the National Gallery of Art has also enabled the museum to significantly expand its collection of contemporary photographs and videos. In addition to contemporary photographs acquired with the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund and pledged by Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker, the museum has received significant donations of work by Paul Graham, including two series titled *Pittsburgh* (2004), a pledge from Susan and Peter MacGill; and seven photographs by Simon Norfolk, a gift from Theresa Luisotti. The Gallery has also expanded its video collection with Rineke Dijkstra's *I See A Woman Crying, Weeping Woman* (2009), a three-channel video; and James Nares's video *Street* (2011). In addition, the 25th Anniversary Photography Initiative secured major funding for photography exhibitions, publications, and lecture programs, including a new series made possible by the Arnold and Augusta Newman Foundation.

The Altering Eye and Exhibition Curator

The curator of ***Celebrating Photography at the National Gallery of Art: Recent Gifts*** is Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head of the department of photographs, National Gallery of Art. She was also the primary curator behind the 25th Anniversary Photography Initiative, along with associate curators Diane Waggoner and Andrea Nelson, both at the Gallery, as well as Sarah Kennel, former associate curator at the Gallery and now curator of photography at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

The major publication *The Altering Eye: Photography at the National Gallery of Art* accompanies ***Celebrating Photography at the National Gallery of Art: Recent Gifts***. Edited by Greenough, with Kennel, Waggoner, Nelson, and Philip Brookman, consulting curator in the department of photographs. This volume charts the history and distinctive aspects of the Gallery's collection of photographs and highlights 325 of its most important works, with brief essays situating these treasures in their historical and aesthetic contexts. This publication was made possible by the Marlene Nathan Meyerson Family Foundation. Additional funding is kindly provided by Edward Lenkin and Roselin Atzwanger.

Published by the National Gallery of Art with Thames and Hudson, the 360-page book is available in hardcover for purchase in the Gallery Shops. To order, please visit shop.nga.gov; call (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; fax (202) 789-3047; or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov.

General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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[In Light of the Past: Twenty-Five Years of Photography at the National Gallery of Art](#)

May 3—July 26, 2015

[The Memory of Time: Contemporary Photographs at the National Gallery of Art, Acquired with the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund](#)

May 3—September 13, 2015

CURATOR BIOGRAPHY

[Sarah Greenough](#)

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Exhibition Page:

[Celebrating Photography at the National Gallery of Art: Recent Gifts](#)

[Department of Photographs](#)

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